

# Alabama Power Co. Undertakes Program To Better Housing Conditions for Workers

The Alabama Power Company has undertaken a housing program at its Gorgas, Ala., operations that demonstrates not only an appreciation of the genuine needs of employes, but a recognition of the long-term advantages in cooperation and good will to be won by an endeavor to afford workers decent and comfortable living quarters. The program is a forward-looking step that will doubtless go a long way toward perpetuating the cooperative spirit already existing between officials and workers at the Gorgas coal mine and steam plant. The plant is one of the largest steam electric generating plants in the Southeast, consuming about 3,400 tons of coal per day when operating at capacity. Some 575 men are employed at the mine and steam plant.

An estimated expenditure of \$500,000 will be made in remodeling and modernizing the 128 houses located near the operations and in erecting 67 attractive new brick buildings complete with all modern facilities. Modernization of many of the homes has already been completed and construction of the new dwellings is scheduled to begin as soon as materials and skilled help are available.

Cooperation is the keynote of employe-employer relations at the Gorgas operations, as attested to by U.M.W. International Representative John J. Hanratty, who, with several other officials of the Union, recently visited the mine and viewed the housing settlement. The occasion was the presentation, to the some 275 workers and officials of the colliery, of the "War Production Efficiency" and "Victory Coal Production" awards made annually by *Coal Age* magazine. Speakers at the brief, in-between-shift ceremony stressed the fact that the spirit of good will and cooperation existing between and practiced by the mine management and workers was a major factor in achieving the increases in efficiency and production that won the awards. Last year coal production at the Gorgas pit climbed nearly 100,000 tons above that of 1943 with 29 fewer men at work. Accidents decreased 69 percent.

After the ceremony U.M.W. officials present inspected the newly modernized houses. International Representative Hanratty found the new installations made the houses comparable to the best workers' houses in the country. To make the houses more livable and attractive, weatherproof roofs, doors and windows, insulated ceilings, walls and partitions, hardwood floors, hot and cold running water, complete bathroom fixtures and up-to-date sewerage and sanitary facilities were in the process of being installed. Miners' wives, Hanratty reported, particularly welcomed the improvements. Said Mrs. Arthur Edgill when asked by the U.M.W. official how she would like to move back to the old house: "I enjoy living here and I'm not leaving this house for anything or anybody."

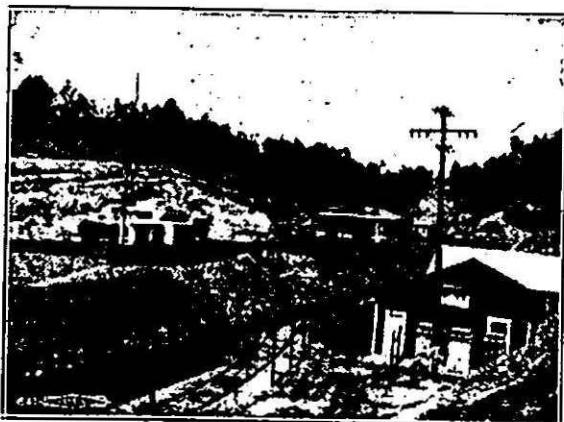
The settlement, established for employes at both the mine and steam plant, is a series of villages, varying in size from 12 to 40 houses, situated in valleys between the wooded hills. Each house is surrounded by a sizeable plot that is large enough for a vegetable garden and poultry pen. Churches, schools and shopping centers are near the community and energetic efforts are underway to bring about construction of a new centralized school. The location provides natural recreation facilities. Nearby are the Warrior River where fish abound and wooded sections where hunting is reported to be good. Yet, the mine portal is no more than a mile to a mile and a half away from any section of the settlement. "Rents for four, five, and six-room houses (\$2 per room) are practically the same as miners elsewhere are paying for tumble-down shacks," Hanratty reported.

Streets are already being laid out for the new village. According to the plan under development each of the new dwellings

will be situated on approximately an acre of ground. As the lifetime of the Gorgas mine is estimated at from 50 to 75 years, the houses will be put up for sale on long-term payments by the company.

"Nature has tried to make these villages very desirable places for the miners to live and raise their families and the coal company has gone all-out in its effort to provide the proper kind of houses for the miners," International Representative Hanratty observed. The inspection tour of the settlement convinced U.M.W. officials, he stated, that the Alabama Power Company is deserving of a "great deal of credit for its undertaking to furnish comfortable homes for the men who toil in the mines."

U. S. hospital ships in service cost \$300,000,000. War Bonds pay for them.



Shown is haulage way from the mine to the tippie, also repair shops, first-aid station and other up-to-date installations.



Company officials and officers of Local Union No. 1813, U.M.W.A., who did their full share in putting Gorgas mine on the Nation's map in 1944. Left to right, back row: Harry Johnstone, mine manager; Coleman Adkins, Clarence Jackson and Chester Adkins, mine committeemen, and George Flynn, president Local Union No. 1813. Front row: G. E. Nason, mine superintendent; Tom Woods and Henry Atkins, mine foremen; Paul Glaze, chief electrician, and C. A. McGaha, safety inspector.